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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE



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Soviets Approach the Finnish on CSCE

The Soviets have apparently revised their timetable for concluding the European Security Conference, but they still desire to hold the conference before the traditional European August vacation. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Soviets had been on record as supporting the June 30 finale proposed by Brezhnev, but that date has become increasingly unrealistic. Most Western delegations now acquiesce in holding the final stage at Helsinki this summer and at the summit level, an outcome the Soviets have sought for years.

Moscow now seems concerned that Finnish domestic politics may endanger the event for which it has striven so persistently. Its concern led to a display of "Finlandization" in action when President Podgorny warned Finnish Foreign Minister Karjalainen that Western opponents of CSCE could use Finnish political instability as an excuse to delay the glorious conclusion the Soviets are now so near to achieving. This Soviet intervention has already set the Finns to scrambling. President Kekkonen asserted that Finland is ready to host the final stage at any time, given four weeks' notice [REDACTED]

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Why Have the Soviets Not
Said More About Mayaguez?

It may be that the Soviets just have no taste for nautical adventures. Not a word have they said in public about the Glomar Explorer, and in the past few days they have seemed no more enthusiastic about devoting time and space to the Mayaguez affair. They were slow in getting any Mayaguez coverage in the central press, and when they did, it was confined to reasonably straight reportage. Perhaps the most tendentious note was a *Pravda* headline on May 16: "War Acts of the U.S.A. Near the Coast of Cambodia."

Moscow's reluctance to milk the Mayaguez affair may stem, in part, from a general policy of going easy on US conduct in Indochina, but it seems likely that other factors have been more important. As a world power and a major seafaring nation that has a national interest in the right of innocent passage, the Soviet Union is reluctant to put itself in a position of seeming to support the idea of piracy on the high seas. Moscow almost certainly thought, from the very beginning of the incident, that the Cambodians had a questionable case. The Soviets could have twisted that coverage to emphasize the alleged violation of Cambodian waters, but they chose not to do so. The Soviets, who are not well disposed to the new leaders in Phnom Penh, feel no obligation to rush to their defense and are probably trying to tell them indirectly that if they want Soviet aid and comfort they will have to be more receptive to Moscow. At the same time, by replaying Teng Hsiao-ping's cautious remarks on the Mayaguez affair, the Soviets may be trying to tell the new Cambodian leaders that they have some need for a relationship with the Soviet Union.

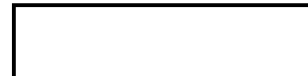
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Unless the Soviets have written off the Khmer Communists, which still seems unlikely, they may make a greater effort in the coming weeks to portray Peking as pusillanimous while they stand ready to help Phnom Penh.

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Poland: Personnel Changes Have Begun

The Gierek regime has announced the first personnel changes in its sweeping reorganization of the party and government bureaucracies. In the coming months hundreds of Polish officials will be affected.

Over the weekend the Gdansk party first secretary, Tadeusz Bejm, was replaced by his second secretary, and in Lublin party boss Piotr Karpiuk was replaced by the province governor. In addition, Bialystok first secretary Zdzislaw Kurowski was named to become chairman of the Federation of Socialist Unions of Polish Youth.

Bejm and Karpiuk have been placed "at the disposal of the Central Committee." Both men have long experience in governmental and economic affairs, and Gierek may want to bring them into the central leadership to help with the reorganization. Karpiuk, however, has told the US ambassador that he disagrees with some of Gierek's economic policies. It is thus possible that he is viewed as a troublemaker at the provincial level and is being eased out.

Whatever the case, other changes throughout the party apparatus will probably follow in the immediate future. The reorganization on the government side will reportedly be approved by parliament "very soon"--perhaps by the end of the month. All signs are that Gierek is calling the tune and that he intends to come out of the reorganizations with a tighter knit and more responsive apparatus. [REDACTED]

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Budapest Approves Emigration for Dissident

After several months of procrastination, the Hungarian regime has told dissident intellectual Ivan Szelenyi that he will be permitted to emigrate.

Szelenyi and two other dissidents were detained by the police last October for producing a controversial study that barely stopped short of saying Hungary is run by a separate "ruling class." At that time, the three men were given the choice of emigrating or of stopping their controversial activities. Two opted to leave the country, but Budapest subsequently has been dragging its feet. On May 8, the authorities finally told Szelenyi that his application had been refused. A week later, however, they relented, apparently after he threatened to "go public."

The decision to let Szelenyi go represents a broader interpretation of permissible exceptions to Hungarian law's virtually total prohibition on emigration, and thus increases the possibility that Budapest will be forthcoming in another emigration case involving family reunification with a US citizen. [REDACTED]

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Solzhenitsyn To Visit US

Exiled Soviet writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and his wife, who are now visiting Canada, are planning to spend up to four months in the US beginning later this month. Solzhenitsyn did not give US visa officers a detailed itinerary, but said that he wants to visit historic Russian settlements in Alaska and to do research at the Hoover Institute at Stanford.

The Solzhenitsyns were stripped of their Soviet citizenship when they were exiled in February 1974, and are traveling on Swiss certificates of identity. They reportedly are dissatisfied with life in Zurich, however, and earlier this month Solzhenitsyn told Canadian newsmen that he was looking for a house in "Ontario," possibly to settle there. [REDACTED]

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Kreisky in Bulgaria

The friction between Vienna and Belgrade (*Staff Notes*, May 16) emerged again during Chancellor Kreisky's visit to Bulgaria last week.

The Austrians, conscious of their neutrality and mindful of Bulgarian-Yugoslav rivalries, have generally avoided any commentary on Bulgarian policies. In this case, however, Vienna was smarting under continued Yugoslav charges that it is violating the Austrian State Treaty. Chancellor Kreisky took an indirect counterpunch at Belgrade by labeling Bulgaria's version of Balkan cooperation "constructive." This formulation will irk the Yugoslavs, who tend to see Soviet designs behind any Bulgarian policy.

Otherwise, the Kreisky visit was routine. The two sides concentrated on the further development of trade and economic relations, and--after ten years of negotiations--concluded a consular agreement. The final communique stressed the need for peaceful co-existence and adopted a banal formulation that covered their diverging views. [REDACTED]

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